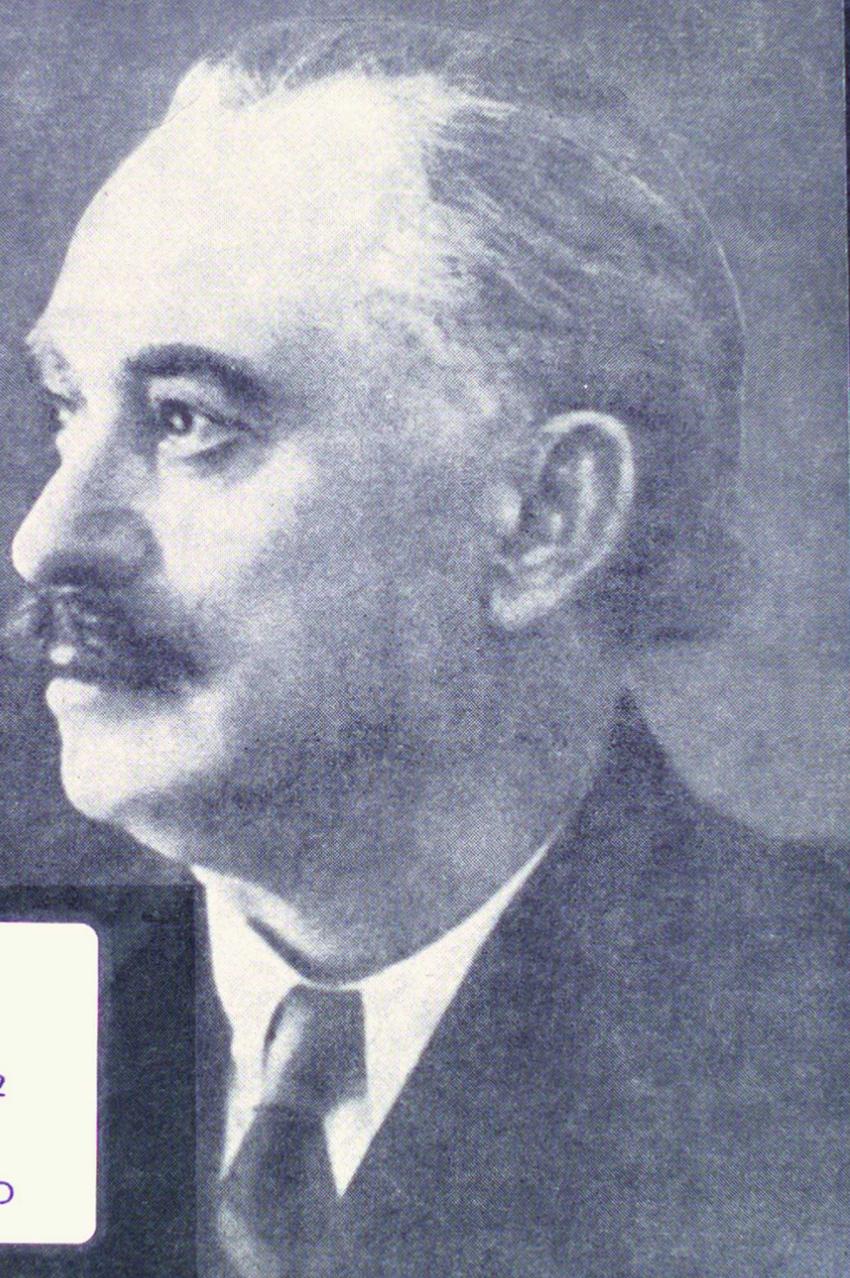


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GEORGI DIMITROV

90th Birth Anniversary

EDITORIAL PANEL OF
MARXIST THOUGHT SERIES:

K. I. Zarodov, P. Courtieu, J. Fuchs

PEACE AND SOCIALISM
PUBLISHERS
PRAGUE 1972

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REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNE AND THEORETICIAN

Todor Zhivkov

The 90th anniversary of the birth of Georgi Dimitrov, leader of Bulgaria's working class and outstanding leader of the world Communist movement, falls on June 18, 1972.

The anniversary will be extensively celebrated by Communists, workers, peasants and progressives in all countries.

This book contains an article by Comrade Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, reprinted from *World Marxist Review*. Also included in the book are passages from Dimitrov's works, which, the reader will see, are today as vital and relevant as ever. From the vast legacy of the distinguished revolutionary and Communist the compilers have selected passages dealing with issues in which Dimitrov made his greatest contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory—exposure of the essence of fascism, analysis of the united front problem, and study of People's Democracy.

The Publishers hope that readers, especially the younger generation, will also be interested in the brief account of Dimitrov's life and revolutionary activity.

Edited by B. Avramova

Compiled by V. V. Sukhodeyev

The life and work of Georgi Dimitrov, a great son of Bulgaria, are inseparable from the class struggle of the Bulgarian proletariat and the international working-class movement, from the struggle for the victory of communism throughout the world.

"Not a single class in history," Lenin wrote, "has achieved power without producing its political leaders, its prominent representatives able to organise a movement and lead it" (*Coll. Works*, Vol. 4, p. 370). The working class and Communist movement of the world have produced, and continue to produce, great thinkers and ideologists, leaders and organisers, politicians and statesmen keenly attuned to the march of history.

All these qualities were embodied in Georgi Dimitrov, a printing worker, Communist militant, leader of the BCP, a man the world proletariat had raised to organiser, leader and theoretician of its revolutionary struggle.

I

Georgi Dimitrov began his career at the turn of the century.

Active in Bulgaria at the time was the Social-Democratic Workers' Party, member of the Second International, a party holding a revolutionary, Marxist position under the leadership of its founder, Dimitr Blagoev. Dimitrov joined it in 1902. As early as 1909 he was elected to its Central Committee on which he remained to the end of his life.

Dimitrov grew and matured as a proletarian leader in the imperialist epoch, at a time of nascent revolutionary

upheavals. He was quick to grasp the laws of revolutionary struggle and was able lucidly to explain them to the workers. A fiery speaker and agitator, he went from town to town, organised public meetings, championed revolutionary Marxism, helped in forming local Party and trade union organisations and fostered the proletariat's confidence.

For many years leader of the General Trade Union League and the founder of the trade union press, Dimitrov battled with opportunist theories about the "neutrality" of unions and resisted attempts to dissociate the unions from the overall struggle of the working class for socialism. He knew from the bitter experience of the class struggle that disunity spells defeat for the proletariat and he worked for the formation of strong and close-knit trade unions that could organise the resistance of labour to bourgeois class oppression.

During World War I Bulgaria's Marxists held their own against the spread of chauvinism. They adhered to a consistently internationalist position and showed up the imperialist character of the war, stressing that the working class had nothing in common with the crimes of the bourgeoisie and monarchy. A loyal disciple and comrade-in-arms of Dimitr Blagoev, Dimitrov launched vigorous anti-war activity in the National Assembly and the Sofia municipality. There, too, he came forward as an ardent revolutionary and fine organiser. His forceful speeches met with eager response among the masses, whom they inspired with courage and a readiness for struggle. He was jailed for his revolutionary activity against the imperialist war.

Together with the whole Party and all the working people of his country, Dimitrov hailed the victory of the October Revolution, and was quick to see its historic significance. "It was the *first* victory of the international revolutionary proletariat over capitalism and imperialism," he wrote, "the *beginning* of the world revolution." Dimitrov revered Lenin and was deeply grateful to him as leader of the Bolshevik Party. He stressed that Lenin's name had "become a symbol of the international working-class revolution".

The Bulgarian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (*Tesnyaks*) became a founding member of the Third, Communist International. It was renamed the Bulgarian Communist Party and adopted a new Programme Declaration, announcing its adoption of Leninism. From then on the Party and its leaders were faced, more strongly than ever before, with the task

of assimilating Lenin's ideas. Dimitrov made a thorough study of Lenin's writings.

Close association with the Bulgarian working class, the trust it showed him, gave Dimitrov strength and helped his early rise to the stature of international revolutionary leader. He took an active part in founding the International Council of Trade Unions and subsequently the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), to whose Central Council he was elected from the first. He was entrusted with responsible functions on the Comintern Executive staff and was for many years Bureau secretary of the Balkan Communist Federation.

Dimitrov first met Lenin in 1921 in Moscow. The meeting left a deep impression on him and played a tremendous role in his subsequent development. Contacts with people prominent in the world Communist movement and participation in important forums like Comintern or RILU congresses widened his political and ideological horizons and contributed in vast measure to his theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

On September 23, 1923, he joined Vasil Kolarov in leading the world's first armed rising against fascism. They showed great energy and ability in mobilising and organising the insurgent people. Dimitrov's articles on the united front played an important part in the political preparations for the rising.

Compelled to emigrate after the defeat of the rising, Dimitrov linked his work with the Communist International. Work at the post of secretary of the West European Bureau of the Comintern, which guided 25 Communist parties, underground work in Vienna, Paris and Berlin, organisation of the international proletariat's resistance to the offensive of capital during the world economic crisis (1929-1933), actions against imperialist preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union, political demonstrations for peace and international solidarity, a search for new forms of combining the fight for socialism with the fight for democracy and of illegal with legal activity, and establishing close links between the Communist parties of various countries and the masses, were the content and meaning of Dimitrov's life in those years.

During the Leipzig trial, at a time when the Nazis were establishing their savage rule over Germany with the blessing and support of monopoly capital, Dimitrov showed himself before the whole world to be a Communist leader of the

Leninist type, intrepid fighter, a man of great erudition and culture who had the deepest faith in communism, a brilliant speaker and polemist. At that "trial of the century" Dimitrov turned into prosecutor and presented an indictment of the criminal fascist regime such as had never come from the dock of a bourgeois courtroom. His conduct in front of his Nazi judges was that of a staunch Communist and consistent internationalist who inflicted the first moral and political defeat on fascism and inspired a widespread international movement against imperialism. The wave of anger that rose against the frame-up, the protest meetings and demonstrations, the petitions and appeals, the speeches and articles by the most prominent spokesmen of world opinion—this muster of solidarity showed that there were forces in the world prepared to resist and repulse the fascist offensive.

On assuming the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Dimitrov worked out the fundamental problems of its strategy and tactics and strove to impart a Leninist character to the Party. Led by him, the Party defeated long standing "Left" sectarian and dogmatic trends in its leadership and became a party of the Leninist type. It drew continuously on the experience of the Bolshevik Party, improving its ability to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism in Bulgarian conditions and gaining revolutionary experience. Thanks to Dimitrov's leadership, it established itself as the only leader of the working class, struck deep roots among the labouring peasantry, set up a united front in alliance with the sound forces of the Bulgarian Agrarian League, extended and strengthened the worker-peasant alliance and won a large body of intellectuals for the Communist cause.

Led by Dimitrov, the BCP initiated the formation of the Fatherland Front, united all progressive and patriotic forces and led the guerrilla movement and the working people's struggle against the Nazi invaders and their Bulgarian flunkies. The programme of the Fatherland Front became the banner of Bulgaria's salvation by rallying the people's forces. The Party combined the people's fight against fascism and war with the workers' struggle for socialism, and national tasks with the international tasks of the revolutionary movement, and assured the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria.

That crucial period in our history fully revealed the talent and energy of Dimitrov as a master of revolution, his ability

to make a specific analysis of specific situations, arouse the working class and other working people and lead them to victory.

II

On September 9, 1944, the working class, allied with the peasantry and with the support of the victorious Soviet Army, launched an armed rising, overthrew bourgeois rule and took political power. A continuation of the October Revolution, which it repeated in the main points, the revolution of September 9 marked the beginning of a new era in Bulgarian history, the era of socialism.

Dimitrov returned to his country after years of political exile. His tremendous prestige as leader and teacher of the working class and other working people became an important factor for the progress of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria. As General Secretary of the BCP and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, he directed the intricate and complex process of thoroughly reorganising every sphere of the country's political, economic and cultural life. The problems which arose daily in the course of the transition from capitalism to socialism were formidable. Our Communists learned from experience that the task was not only to win power but to retain and consolidate it.

Working in a new and extremely tense situation, Dimitrov brought to bear his outstanding qualities of proletarian and popular leader. Under his leadership our people foiled international reaction's plans for the restoration of capitalism in Bulgaria, defeated the anti-popular opposition and nationalised industry and banking. The BCP asserted its place and role as the nation's leading political force.

Dimitrov's revolutionary acumen and talent as a theoretician, organiser and builder of the new society were especially manifest when drawing up the programmatic tasks for the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Lenin's thesis that the economic foundation of socialism must be large-scale industry and an agriculture based on it—a thesis tested and proved in the Soviet Union—enabled Dimitrov to define socialist industrialisation as the key task in reorganising the national economy of a backward Bulgaria.

Special credit is due to Dimitrov for the solution of

problems of the socialist reorganisation of agriculture. Drawing on Lenin's cooperative plan and the universally valid experience of Soviet collective farming, and creatively applying both, he evolved a concept of reorganising and developing Bulgarian agriculture on socialist lines. This was accomplished through agricultural labour cooperatives without land nationalisation. Dimitrov proved that small private property can be turned into cooperative property and subsequently into property of the whole people. "With the gradual joining of agricultural cooperatives by poor and middle peasants and the development of machine and tractor stations, and as a result of the prohibition to lease land, the restriction and subsequent prohibition of buying and selling land, and the reduction and eventual abolition of rent by decision of the cooperative peasants themselves (when conditions make that possible), the issue of nationalising the land will be settled in practice through the whole land being left to the working peasants for permanent use." Life proved Dimitrov's forecasts correct.

Under his leadership the groundwork was laid for a planned national economy at all levels. He saw the building up of the nation's economic potential and the most extensive economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies as decisive factors for rapid economic progress.

Dimitrov proceeded from the Marxist-Leninist thesis that the new, socialist society can only be built as a result of conscious activity by the masses, and he attached great importance to the cultural and spiritual growth of the masses. An enormous amount of work was carried out with his direct participation to democratise education, eliminate reactionary schools and trends in science, link up the arts with the people's requirements and make cultural values the patrimony of the masses.

Under Dimitrov's leadership, the first socialist Constitution of Bulgaria was drafted. It formalised the historic results of the people's rising on September 9 and was a further step in the development of the people's democratic form of government.

Led by Dimitrov, the working class established a new type of political relations with other social groups, and the Communist Party entered into a new type of interaction with the other political parties. The Social-Democratic Party merged with the Communist Party on a Marxist-Leninist basis. The

Agrarian League made the construction of a classless society its programme goal. Other political parties, having fulfilled their missions, joined the Fatherland Front. From a political movement the Front became a united socio-political organisation of the people. The BCP became the universally recognised leading force in the intricate process of building socialism as an integral social system.

Central to Dimitrov's multiform activities as builder of the new Bulgaria was his effort to develop and consolidate the Party in a new historical context. He saw the Party's strength in extending and strengthening its links with the masses, in its struggle to promote socialist democracy and the socialist socio-political system, in its ability correctly to define programmatic, strategic and tactical tasks and to ensure their fulfilment.

The progress made in the early years of development was analysed and generalised by the Fifth Party Congress (1948). Despite his many and exacting duties, Dimitrov invested much energy to prepare the Congress. His Congress report, summing up past achievement and outlining the main stages of subsequent advance, was the closing chapter of his life, his testament to the Party and the people.

III

The main feature of Dimitrov's manifold activities, the very essence of his life, was proletarian internationalism, the fight for the unity of action of the working class and the Communist and Workers' parties.

Proletarian internationalism has been the unshakable foundation of the revolutionary labour movement ever since its inception. The rousing slogan of the *Communist Manifesto*—"Workers of the world, unite!"—became the banner of all parties loyal to the working-class cause. "Capital," Lenin wrote, "is an international force. To vanquish it, an international workers' alliance, an international workers' brotherhood, is needed" (Vol. 30, p. 293).

Educated in the ranks of the *Tesnyaks*, who were known for their devotion to proletarian internationalism and won high praise from Lenin as "internationalists in practice", Dimitrov became one of the foremost internationalists of our epoch—both in terms of theoretical elaboration of the prob-

lems of internationalism and practical work and leadership. Throughout his life he upheld Lenin's conception of the indivisibility of the class struggle on an international and a national scale. "Proletarian internationalism," he pointed out, "far from contradicting the struggle of the working people of individual countries for national, social and cultural freedom, provides, thanks to international proletarian solidarity and unity in struggle, the support needed for victory in this struggle."

In Dimitrov's life and work, proletarian internationalism and genuine patriotism fused to form a single motive power. With Leninist thoroughness he studied the general laws of revolutionary struggle, ever conscious of the need to apply them with due regard to the specifics of each country. Proletarian internationalism, he said, must "acclimatise itself", strike deep roots in native soil. A convinced opponent of national nihilism, he said: "There can be no genuinely popular patriotism without international solidarity any more than genuine international solidarity without genuinely popular patriotism."

Dimitrov was quick to appraise the new stage which the proletariat's struggle had entered after the October Revolution. The revolution brought into being the world's first socialist state and the struggle to defend and support the "lodestar of the whole of labouring mankind" imparted a new content to proletarian internationalism. Unity of the proletariat of the capitalist countries with the victorious working class of the Soviet Union was seen by Dimitrov as an earnest of future victories for the international revolutionary movement. This lay at the root of his conclusion that the attitude to the Soviet Union is the principal criterion, the touchstone of the sincerity and honesty of every leader of the working-class movement, every workers' party or working people's organisation and every democrat.

A consistent Leninist and determined opponent of dogmatism, set formulas and Right-wing opportunism, Dimitrov made an immense contribution to the formulation of a common internationalist line for the Communists at a time when fascism was on the offensive and the threat of a new world war loomed large.

The new strategic line whose main object was to stop the advance of fascism and prevent war, carried forward Lenin's idea of the dialectical connection between the struggle for

democracy and the struggle for socialism. The main condition for stopping fascism and averting war was to establish a united front of the working class of the world in support of the Soviet Union, the proletarian state standing guard for peace. Dimitrov rejected dogmatic ideas preventing working-class unity and stressed that the only requisite of unity is united action against fascism, the offensive of capital and the war menace. The fundamental idea of the united front was voiced by Dimitrov at the Leipzig trial—he said that "*mass work, mass activity, mass opposition and the united front—no adventurism*" was the alpha and omega of Communist policy.

The policy of uniting the working people and all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces in popular fronts bore ample fruit in many countries. Its crowning gain was the victory of the people's democratic revolution in a number of European, Asian and Latin American countries which today are building a socialist society.

Dimitrov's ideas about a united, popular and anti-imperialist front retain their exceptional significance to this day.

History has shown that international proletarian solidarity played a big role in defending and supporting the world's first worker-peasant state. It has shown that the process of emergence of a number of new socialist states and the formation of the socialist world system was actively supported and, moreover, largely predetermined by the power of the Soviet Union, which by defeating the fascist war machine created favourable conditions for the victory of the popular forces and rendered all-round political, military and economic assistance to the countries that had smashed the chains of capitalism. Today life shows again and again that united action by the Communist and Workers' parties, the national liberation movement and all progressives of the world is the only force that can resist imperialism, win national freedom and independence for the peoples and guarantee their political, economic and social progress.

And in the Document of the 1969 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties we can hear the echo of Dimitrov's fervent appeal to expose the imperialist warmongers and stranglers of freedom, for unity of action against them, for world peace.

The principal aspect of united action of the anti-imperialist forces today is the fight against the danger of a thermo-nuclear war which threatens to wipe out the peoples of the

world. As in the resistance to the offensive of fascism and preparation of the second world war, so in the struggle against imperialism and preparation of a third world war, the main safeguard of peace and freedom is the Soviet Union. This is why Dimitrov's appeal to the Communists of all countries, the international working class and all progressive forces to support in every way the foreign policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state, retains its full force. Active and consistent implementation of the peace programme which L. I. Brezhnev set forth in his report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU and which has won the support of the socialist community of nations has already produced notable changes in favour of international detente. There can be no doubt that increasing support for the Soviet peace programme by the Communists and all peace forces of the world is the only way to achieve a relaxation of tensions and prevent war.

To end once and for all imperialist aggression, colonialism and neo-colonialism, fascism and racial oppression, it is necessary to fight monopoly capital with the utmost resolve. United action by the Communist and Workers' parties, by all contingents of the working class and other working people, all anti-monopoly and democratic forces can bring about in individual countries democratic changes that will curb the power of monopoly capital, weaken its positions and create favourable conditions for the working-class movement to achieve its ultimate goal, a socialist society.

Many of the ideas which Dimitrov championed found expression and were carried forward in the documents of international meetings, and are creatively put into practice by brother parties. "Faced with a new threat from the Right-wing forces of the FRG," said Kurt Bachmann, speaking at the Tenth Congress of the BCP, "the German Communist Party follows Georgi Dimitrov's recommendations by striving to unite all democratic forces." Dimitrov's ideas will also be found in the programmes of brother parties. For instance, the French Communist Party's Programme for a Democratic Popular Unity Government calls for a government that would effect far-reaching anti-monopoly, democratic reforms in every sphere of French society and bring about advanced democracy as a stage of transition to socialism.

Dimitrov's ideas of a united, popular and anti-imperialist front are vastly important to the peoples fighting for national liberation. "Your intense struggle to establish the Fatherland

Front in the difficult days of World War II and the behests of that outstanding son of the Bulgarian people, Georgi Dimitrov, are of worldwide significance," said Luis Corvalán, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, at the Tenth BCP Congress. "Life has shown that division of the working people amounts to defeat and tends to strengthen the exploiters' position. Only unity of the working people and unrelenting struggle lead to victory and class emancipation. Creative application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism today is linked with the Communists' fight for the unity of the working class and all the revolutionary forces fighting to abolish capitalism."

World development today is determined by the socialist world system, the international working class and the national liberation movement. The outcome of the fight against imperialism, for peace and social progress, depends entirely on the cohesion and united action of the three revolutionary world forces of our time. The backbone of this unity is the cohesion of the most class-conscious, consistent and organised revolutionary contingent—the international Communist and working-class movement. The 1969 Meeting, noting that unification of the Communist and Workers' parties is the most important factor for uniting all anti-imperialist forces, confirmed once again that relations between brother parties are based on the principles of proletarian internationalism, solidarity, mutual support, respect for autonomy and equal rights.

Contemporary opportunists try to undermine the unity of the Communist movement by attacking the very essence of the principle of proletarian internationalism—the attitude to the CPSU and the Soviet Union. Their arguments boil down to the allegation that it is no longer the duty of the world Communist and working-class movement to support and defend the Soviet Union, since the Soviet Union is no longer the world's only socialist country as in the past.

Are the opportunists right? Is Dimitrov's thesis that the attitude to the Soviet Union and Lenin's Party is a criterion of proletarian internationalism, outdated? Far from being obsolete, it has gained in importance. To begin with, the Soviet Union is the embodiment of socialism and communism to hundreds of millions of people, to all friends and foes of peace. The allegiance of a country to the socialist world is gauged by how close it is to the Soviet Union's social system and home and foreign policy. It is an open secret that in

some socialist countries there have been, and still are, serious nationalist trends. Not only do they encourage Right and "Left"-wing revisionism and endanger the socialist gains of the working people and the socialist development of these countries, but grow into anti-Sovietism and undermine the unity and cohesion of the socialist world system.

Secondly, attempts are made in the world Communist movement—under cover of the correct thesis about the autonomy and equality of Communist parties—to rob proletarian internationalism of its substance and meaning. Attacks against the "hegemony" of the CPSU show beyond doubt that Lenin's Party is the foremost ideological and political force of our time which plays the leading role in strengthening the cohesion of the international Communist movement and is the main obstacle to those who would like to divide the national contingents of the movement and set them against one another.

How far one can go in setting oneself against the CPSU and the Soviet Union is illustrated by the example of the Mao Tse-tung group. There could hardly be a more striking instance of betrayal of the cause of the international working class and one's own people than the degradation of this group, which has chosen nationalism and poses the Communist Party of China against the CPSU and the world Communist movement, and China against the socialist commonwealth, adopted an anti-Soviet position and has gone to the extreme of united action with the ruling imperialist quarters of the United States—the worst enemy of communism, the national liberation movement and human progress generally.

IV

Dimitrov was a giant of action and thought, a well-educated, original, profound and creative Marxist-Leninist. His practical activity was inseparable from his theoretical work. His speeches and articles on problems of the day, as well as offering solutions for this or that urgent problem, deal with theoretical problems of tremendous and lasting importance.

As early as the years after World War I, Dimitrov analysed and gave a scientific definition of fascism as an anti-popular class phenomenon. He noted that fascism is neither a supra-class nor a peripheral phenomenon of capitalist society, as

reactionary politicians would have it, but a pronounced form of the dictatorship of the exploiting class, the complete negation of all democracy and all political rights and freedoms for the masses. In the articles he wrote in that period, Dimitrov elaborated his views on the united front and the worker-peasant alliance in the fight against fascism.

In his report to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, Dimitrov dealt with problems of the united front in the worldwide class struggle and formulated the new strategy and tactics of organising the revolutionary process in given situations. He also gave a new and profound definition of fascism, which he described as the *open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital*. As regards German fascism, Dimitrov pointed out that it was operating "as the *strike force of international counter-revolution, the main firebrand of imperialist war and the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the working people of the world*".

Dimitrov's report to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern is one of the most important documents of the world Communist movement of the period between the two world wars, a model of creative approach and of promoting Marxist-Leninist theory in close association with the pressing needs of the revolutionary movement.

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern elected Dimitrov General Secretary, a post he held till the Comintern was dissolved (1943). In that capacity he concentrated on practical measures to help the Communist parties operate the new line and on theoretical elaboration of a number of relevant problems. On the eve of World War II, and particularly during the war, he generalised the experience gained and evolved the concept of extending the social basis of the anti-fascist struggle and establishing national, patriotic fronts, specifically by bringing patriotic-minded sections of the bourgeoisie into the people's anti-fascist movement.

Dimitrov's views on the united front and on united and popular front governments carried forward Lenin's theory of the ways and means of accomplishing the socialist revolution. They gave Communists a clear perspective in the fight against fascism and were proved correct by the victory of the people's democratic revolution at the end of World War II and after it. They still help Communists and revolutionaries to take the



Dimitrov delivering report to 7th Congress of Communist International, Moscow, August 2, 1935

right approach to allies and seek unity of action with them in forming united popular and national fronts.

As a Marxist theoretician and General Secretary of the Comintern, Dimitrov did very much for the education and development of prominent leaders and functionaries of fraternal Communist and Workers' parties. He considered that the main task and fundamental duty of every Party and every Communist is to master Leninism, the Leninist organisational, political and tactical principles, and to fight for Communist unity and the purity of Marxism-Leninism. To him, sectarianism and dogmatism were no longer an "infantile disorder", as Lenin described them in 1920, but a dangerous "ingrained evil" which the parties must do away with if they want to accomplish the tasks set before them by historical development. He also warned that as Communist parties extended their effort among the masses towards establishing a united and popular front the danger of Right-wing opportunism would grow and would have to be combated without compromise.

Dimitrov made a most valuable contribution to Marxist theory on problems of the transition to socialism, in particular the class character of people's democratic rule and the economic prerequisites and peculiarities of this transition in various countries.

In working out important problems of Bulgaria's social development, Dimitrov proceeded from Lenin's thesis that there are general laws of the transition to socialism, pointing out that they are valid for all countries. "The distinctive form of transition from capitalism to socialism in our country neither abolishes nor can abolish the main laws governing the transitional period, for they are common to all countries." He stressed that these general laws were confirmed by the practice of building socialism in the first socialist state, and that the historical experience of the CPSU and Soviet Union, used with due regard to our conditions, "*is the only and best model for building socialism in our country, as in other people's democracies*".

However, Dimitrov often warned against mechanically applying the general laws of the transition from capitalism to socialism and the great experience of the CPSU. We, he said, must study and discern the peculiarities of development of the people's democracies so as to use Marxist-Leninist teachings as a guide to action.

Until the end of World War II, Soviet power was the only known form of proletarian dictatorship. Developments during and after the war produced a new form, people's democracy. This confirmed Lenin's prediction that different nations will follow different paths to socialism, according to concrete historical circumstances.

The discovery of people's democracy as a political form of the proletariat's dictatorship was the result of collective effort by the Communist parties of various countries. But much of the credit must go to Dimitrov: in his report to the Fifth Party Congress he revealed in great detail the nature, role, functions and prospects of people's democracy as a specific form of transition to socialism and a special form of worker-peasant alliance, with the working class leading.

With his deep understanding of the dialectical connection between the objective and subjective, Dimitrov knew there had to be far-reaching changes in ideology, if the economy and social relations were to be changed fundamentally, and in reasonable time. This is why, as well as working on problems of the economy and social organisation, he concerned himself with the cultural problems of the revolution. In line with Lenin's class approach, he regarded cultural development under socialism as a two-fold process—resolute effort to eliminate bourgeois ideology in its every form and assert the Marxist-Leninist principles as the basis for the activity of the whole ideological front.

Dimitrov's writings consistently upheld Lenin's concept of the cultural legacy: socialism is the legitimate heir to all the genuine cultural values left to us by previous epochs. He rejected both a nihilist attitude to this legacy and its unprincipled laudation from positions of nationalism or bourgeois traditionalism.

Dimitrov saw socialist culture as a dialectical combination of the achievements of national culture with the cultural achievements of other nations, first of all the socialist countries. He maintained that as far as the cultural sphere was concerned there are "no superior and inferior nations", and that every nation is capable of "making a valuable contribution of its own to the common treasury of culture".

Throughout his manifold activities as a revolutionary, Dimitrov upheld the purity of Marxist-Leninist theory by combating all attempts to revise it. He considered loyalty to the great theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin and its creative

application in conditions of a new, constantly changing reality a sacred duty in the fight for communism, for the people's happiness.

In scientific theory as in any other field, the main thing is, admittedly, not merely to say something *new*. It is also important that this new be *correct*. Dimitrov wrote articles and speeches to reveal the realities of life to the masses and show the right way to changing life on revolutionary lines. It was his loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and his creative approach to its main principles, which invariably served him as a guide to action, that enabled him to make a very real contribution to Marxism-Leninism—something beyond the ability of self-appointed "renovators" and "modernisers".

The Bulgarian people remember the day in July 1949 when the country learned of the death of Georgi Dimitrov, a fiery tribune, fearless revolutionary and outstanding Marxist-Leninist, the people's beloved leader.

Educated by Dimitrov in a spirit of loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a spirit of revolutionary irreconcilability and perseverance in achieving its goals, the Bulgarian Communist Party continued the



Dimitrov addresses bereaved partisan families, Sofia, May 6, 1947

struggle without Dimitrov—according to Dimitrov. Today, twenty-three years after Dimitrov's death, we can proudly declare that his behest "to achieve in 15-20 years what other countries, in different conditions, required a whole century to achieve" has been fulfilled.

What seemed incredible has become a reality. In an extremely short historical time the People's Republic of Bulgaria, led by the Party of Dimitr Blagoev and Georgi Dimitrov, drawing on the fraternal assistance of the Soviet Union and cooperating with other socialist countries, has successfully coped with the difficult problems of the transitional period, set up a powerful modern industry and a large-scale socialist agriculture and accomplished a deep-going socialist cultural revolution. Socialism, to which Dimitrov dedicated his life, has triumphed completely and irreversibly.

The 10th Congress of the BCP (April 1971) adopted a new Party Programme, a programme for building a developed socialist society in Bulgaria, which is the immediate historic task of Bulgaria's Communists. The Party's policy line approved by the 10th Congress is a continuation and a scientific projection of Dimitrov's Leninist policy of building socialism in our country and promoting the victory of communism throughout the world.

The Bulgarian Communist Party, all working men and women, the whole people of our country, who are celebrating the 90th anniversary of the birth of their great son and leader, an outstanding leader of the international Communist movement, are deeply convinced that theirs is the right path. They are following it in proud awareness of the fact that they are marching in the van of human progress, shoulder to shoulder with the great Soviet people and the peoples of fraternal socialist countries, in a fighting alliance with the Communists and working people of the capitalist countries, with all men on earth who are fighting against imperialism, for freedom and independence, for democracy and socialism.

FROM DIMITROV'S SPEECHES

AT THE LEIPZIG TRIAL

I AM DEFENDING MY COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY, MY IDEALS

I am defending myself, an accused Communist.

I am defending my political honour, my honour as a revolutionary.

I am defending my Communist ideology, my ideals.

I am defending the content and significance of my whole life.

For these reasons every word which I say in this Court is *a part of me*, each phrase is the expression of my deep indignation against the unjust accusation, against Communists being charged with this anti-Communist crime, the burning of the Reichstag.

I have often been reproached for not taking the highest Court in Germany seriously. That is absolutely unjustified.

It is true that the supreme law for me as a Communist is *the programme of the Communist International, the supreme court—the Control Commission of the Communist International*.

But to me as an accused man the Supreme Court of the Reich is something to be considered in all seriousness—not only in that its members possess high legal qualifications, but also because it is a highly important organism of state power, of the ruling order of society; a body which can dispose of the highest penalties. I can say with an easy conscience that everything which I have stated to this Court and everything which I have spoken to the public is the truth and nothing but the truth. As regards my Party, which has been forced underground, I have refused to make any statements. I have always spoken with seriousness and from my inner convictions.

President: I shall not permit you to indulge in Communist

propaganda in this Court. You have persisted in it. If you do not refrain I shall have to prevent you from speaking.

Dimitrov: I must deny absolutely the suggestion that I have pursued propagandist aims. It may be that my defence before this Court has had a certain propagandist effect. It is also possible that my conduct before this Court may serve as an example for other accused Communists. But those were not the aims of my defence. My aims were these: to refute the indictment and to refute the accusation that Dimitrov, Torgler, Popov, and Tanev, that the German Communist Party and the Communist International had anything to do with the fire.

I know that no one in Bulgaria believes in our alleged complicity in the Reichstag fire. I know that everywhere else abroad hardly anyone believes that we had anything to do with it. But in Germany other conditions prevail and in Germany it is not impossible that people might believe such extraordinary assertions. For this reason I desired to prove that the Communist Party had and has nothing whatever to do with the crime.

If the question of propaganda is to be raised, then I may fairly say that many utterances made within this Court were of a propagandist character. The speeches here of Goebbels and Goering had an indirect propagandist effect favourable to Communism, but no one can reproach them for their speeches having produced such results (commotion and laughter in Court).

FASCISTS ARE BARBARIANS AND SAVAGES EVERYWHERE

I have not only been roundly abused by the press—something to which I am completely indifferent—but my Bulgarian people have also, through me, been characterised as savage and barbarous. I have been called a suspicious character from the Balkans, and a wild Bulgarian, I cannot allow such things to pass in silence.

It is true that Bulgarian fascism is savage and barbarous. But the Bulgarian workers and peasants, the Bulgarian people's intelligentsia are by no means savage or barbarous. It is true that the standard of life is not so high in the Balkans as elsewhere in Europe, but it is false to say that the people of Bulgaria are politically or mentally on a lower scale than the

peoples of other countries. Our political struggle, our political aspirations are no less lofty than those of other peoples. A people which lived for five hundred years under a foreign yoke without losing its language and its national character, our working class and peasantry who have fought and are fighting against Bulgarian fascism and for Communism—such a people is not savage and barbarous. Only fascism in Bulgaria is savage and barbarous. But I ask you, *in what country does not fascism bear these qualities?*

President (interrupting Dimitrov): Are you attempting to hint at the political situation in Germany?

Dimitrov (with an ironical smile): Of course not, Mr. President...

The Bulgarian people have fought persistently and with all their strength against foreign oppression. Therefore I protest here and now against these attacks on my people. I have no cause to be ashamed of being Bulgarian, in fact I am proud to say that I am the son of the Bulgarian working class.

MASS WORK, NO ADVENTURISM

It was alleged here that the burning of the Reichstag was to be the signal for an armed insurrection. Attempts were made to justify this theory after the following fashion:

Goering declared before the Court that when Hitler came to power the German Communist Party had to rouse the masses and take action. The Communists had to act then or never, he said. He stated that the Communist Party had for years been appealing to the masses against the National Socialist Party and that, when the latter attained power, the Communists had no alternative but to do something immediately or not at all...

This thesis is attributed to the Communists, but it is not a Communist thesis. It shows how little the enemies of the German Communist Party know it. He who desires to fight his enemy well, must learn to know him. Prohibition of the Party, dissolution of the mass organisations, loss of legality are serious blows indeed for the revolutionary movement. *But this by no means signifies that all is lost...*

Given the necessary situation, the German Communist Party, although illegal, can still carry out a successful revolution. The experience of the Russian Communist Party proves this.

Despite its illegality and the violence of the persecution to which it was subjected, that Party won over the working class in the end and came to power at its head. The leaders of the German Communist Party could not possibly think that with the suppression of their Party all would be lost; that at any given moment the question was now or never; that the alternative was insurrection or doom. The leaders of the German Communist Party could not have entertained such foolish thoughts. Naturally they knew perfectly well that illegality would entail tremendous losses, that it would mean self-sacrifice and heroism, but they also knew that the revolutionary forces of the Party would increase again and that one day it would be able to accomplish its final tasks successfully. It is absurd to believe that the German Communist Party would at that time plunge into such an adventure. *The Communists fortunately are not so near-sighted as their opponents; neither do they lose their heads in difficult situations.*

It must be added that, like every other Communist Party, the German Communist Party is a section of the Communist International...

The Communist International to which all its sections are directly responsible is a world Party, not a mere organisation of conspirators. *Such a world Party does not play with insurrection and revolution.* Such a Party cannot officially say one thing to its millions of adherents and at the same time in secret do the very opposite. Such a Party, my dear Dr. Sack, does not go in for double book-keeping.

Dr. Sack: All right. Carry on with your Communist propaganda.

Dimitrov: Such a Party proceeds with all seriousness and with a full awareness of its responsibility when it approaches the millions of the proletariat and when it adopts its decisions concerning tactics and immediate tasks...

Mass work, mass activity, mass opposition and the united front—no adventurism—these are the alpha and omega of Communist tactics.

WHO NEEDED THE REICHSTAG FIRE?

One question has not been elucidated, either by the prosecution or by the defending counsel. This omission does not surprise me. For it is a question which must have given them

some anxiety. I refer to the question of the political situation in Germany in February 1933—a matter which I must performe deal with now. The political situation towards the end of February 1933 was this, that a bitter struggle was taking place within the camp of the National Front...

This struggle taking place in the camp of the National Front was connected with the behind-the scenes struggle in Germany's leading economic circles. On the one hand was the Krupp-Thyssen circle (the war industry), which for many years past has supported the National Socialists; on the other hand, being gradually pushed into the background, were their opponents.

Thyssen and Krupp wished to establish the principle of absolutism, a political dictatorship under their own personal direction and to substantially depress the living standards of the working class; it was to this end that the crushing of the revolutionary working class was necessary. At the same time the Communist Party was striving to establish a united working class front and to consolidate all forces in resistance to the National Socialist attempts to destroy the working class movement. Part of the Social Democratic workers felt the need of a united front of the working class. They understood it. Many thousands of Social Democratic workers joined the ranks of the German Communist Party. But in February and March, the establishment of a united front meant the mobilisation of the working class against the predatory drive of the capitalists and the violence of the National Socialists; it certainly did not mean insurrection or preparations for insurrection.

President (interrupting): You have always stressed that your sole interest was the Bulgarian political situation. Your present remarks, however, show that you were also keenly interested in the political situation in Germany.

Dimitrov: Mr. President, you are making an accusation against me. I can only make this reply: as a Bulgarian revolutionary I am interested in the revolutionary movement all over the world. I am, for instance, interested in the political situation in South America and, although I have never been there, I know perhaps as much about it as I do of German politics. That does not mean that when a government building in South America is burned down I am the culprit. During these legal proceedings I have learned much and, thanks to



Georgi Dimitrov Accuses

John Hartfield's montage circulated at the time of Leipzig trial, 1933

my political capacity for appreciating things, many details have become clear to me.

The political situation at that time was governed by two chief factors: the first was the effort of the National Socialists to attain power, the second, the counter-factor, was the efforts of the German Communist Party to build up a united working class front. In my view, the accuracy of this has been made abundantly clear during these proceedings.

The National Socialists needed something which would both divert the attention of the people from the difficulties within the National Front and, at the same time, break up the united front of the working class. The "National Government" needed a plausible excuse for its emergency decree of February 28, which abolished the freedom of the press and the inviolability of the individual and introduced a system of police persecution, concentration camps and other measures against the Communists.

President (interrupting): Now you have reached the limit, you are dropping hints.

Dimitrov: My only desire is to explain the political situation in Germany on the eve of the fire, as I understand it to have been ...

Once before I stated that I was in accord with the indictment on one point, and now I am compelled to reaffirm my agreement. I allude to the question whether van der Lubbe acted *alone* in setting fire to the Reichstag or whether he had accomplices. The junior prosecuting counsel, Parrisius, declared here that the fate of the accused depended upon the answer to the question whether van der Lubbe had accomplices. To this I answer, no, a thousand times no. Such a conclusion is illogical and does not follow. *My own deduction is that van der Lubbe did not set fire to the Reichstag alone.* On the basis of the experts' opinion and the evidence which has been submitted, I conclude that the fire in the Plenary Session Chamber of the Reichstag was of a nature different from that in the restaurant, the ground floor, etc. The Session Chamber was set on fire by other persons, employing other means. *Although coincident in time with the fires caused by van der Lubbe himself, the fire in the Session Chamber is fundamentally different.* Most probably van der Lubbe is the unconscious tool of these people, a tool they have misused. Van der Lubbe has by no means told the truth in this Court and he remains persistently silent. The answer to this question does

not decide the fate of the other accused. Van der Lubbe was not alone, true; but neither Dimitrov, nor Torgler, nor Popov, nor Tanev was in his company ...

What is van der Lubbe? A Communist? Inconceivable. An Anarchist? No. He is a declassed worker, a rebellious member of the scum of society. He is a misused creature who has been played off against the working class. No, he is neither a Communist nor an Anarchist. No Communist, no Anarchist anywhere in the world would conduct himself in Court as van der Lubbe has done. Genuine Anarchists often do senseless things, but invariably when they are haled into Court they stand up like men and explain their aims. If a Communist had done anything of this sort, he would not remain silent knowing that four innocent men stood in the dock alongside him. No, van der Lubbe is no Communist. He is no Anarchist; he is the misused tool of fascism ...

Heller, the police official, read in Court a Communist poem out of a book published in 1925 to prove that the Communists set the Reichstag on fire in 1933.

Permit me also the pleasure of quoting a poem, a poem by the greatest German poet, Goethe:

Lerne zeitig klüger sein.
Auf des Glickes grosser Waage
Steht die Zunge selten ein;
Du must steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein.

Yes, he who does not want to be the anvil, must be the hammer ...

In the seventeenth century the founder of scientific physics, Galileo, was arraigned before the stern Court of the Inquisition which had to condemn him to death as a heretic. With profound conviction and determination he exclaimed:

“Eppur si muove!”

This scientific law later became known to all mankind. President (curly interrupts Dimitrov, rises, collects his papers and prepares to leave).

Dimitrov (continues): *No less determined than old Galileo we, Communists, declare today:*

“Eppur si muove!”

The wheel of history... moves and moves towards the final victory of Communism.

Speech before the Court, Dec. 16, 1933.

AT THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN

FASCISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

With the development of the very deep economic crisis, with the general crisis of capitalism becoming sharply accentuated and the mass of working people becoming revolutionised, fascism has embarked upon a wide offensive ...

The imperialist circles are trying to shift the *whole* burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working people. *That is why they need fascism.*

They are trying to solve the problem of markets by enslaving the weak nations, by intensifying colonial oppression and repartitioning the world anew by means of war. *That is why they need fascism.*

They are striving to *forestall* the growth of the forces of revolution by smashing the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and by undertaking a military attack against the Soviet Union—the bulwark of the world proletariat. *That is why they need fascism.*

In a number of countries, Germany in particular, these imperialist circles have succeeded, *before* the masses had decisively turned toward revolution, in inflicting defeat on the proletariat and establishing a fascist dictatorship.

But it is characteristic of the victory of fascism that this victory, on the one hand, bears witness to the weakness of the proletariat, disorganised and paralysed by the disruptive policy of Social-Democracy, by its class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and, on the other, expresses the weakness of the bourgeoisie itself, afraid of the realisation of a united struggle of the working class, afraid of revolution, and no

longer in a position to maintain its dictatorship over the masses by the old methods of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism...

Fascism in power... is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital...

Fascism is not a form of state power "standing above both classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie", as Otto Bauer, for instance, has asserted. It is not "the revolt of the petty bourgeoisie which has captured the machinery of the state", as the British Socialist Brailsford declares. No, fascism is not a power standing above class, nor a power of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpenproletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organisation of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is jingoism in its most brutal form, fomenting bestial hatred of other nations.

This, the true character of fascism, must be particularly stressed; because in a number of countries, under cover of social demagogery, fascism has managed to gain the following of the mass of the petty bourgeoisie that has been driven out of its course by the crisis, and even of certain sections of the most backward strata of the proletariat. These would never have supported fascism if they had understood its real class character and its true nature.

The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume *different forms* in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities and the international position of the given country. In certain countries, principally those in which fascism has no extensive mass basis and in which the struggle of the various groups within the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is rather acute, fascism does not immediately venture to abolish parliament, but allows the other bourgeois parties, as well as the Social-Democratic Parties, to retain a certain degree of legality. In other countries, where the ruling bourgeoisie fears an *early* outbreak of revolution, fascism establishes its unrestricted political monopoly, either immediately or by intensifying its reign of terror against and persecution of all competing parties and groups. This does not prevent fascism, when its position becomes *particularly* acute, from trying to extend its basis and, without altering

its class nature, trying to *combine* open terrorist dictatorship with a crude sham of parliamentarism.

The accession to power of fascism is not an *ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—by another form—open terrorist dictatorship. It would be a serious mistake to ignore this distinction, a mistake which would prevent the revolutionary proletariat from mobilising the widest strata of the working people of town and country for the struggle against the menace of the seizure of power by the fascists, and from taking advantage of the contradictions which exist in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. But it is a mistake, no less serious and dangerous, to *underrate* the importance, for the establishment of fascist dictatorship, of the *reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie which are at present increasingly developing in bourgeois-democratic countries*—measures which suppress the democratic liberties of the working people, falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement.

What is the source of the influence of fascism over the masses? Fascism is able to attract the masses because it demagogically appeals to their *most urgent needs and demands*. Fascism not only inflames prejudices that are deeply ingrained in the masses, but also plays on the better sentiments of the masses, on their sense of justice, and sometimes even on their revolutionary traditions. Why do the German fascists, those lackeys of the big bourgeoisie and mortal enemies of socialism, represent themselves to the masses as "Socialists", and depict their accession to power as a "revolution"? Because they try to exploit the faith in revolution and the urge toward socialism that lives in the hearts of the mass of working people in Germany.

Fascism acts in the interests of the extreme imperialists, but it presents itself to the masses in the guise of champion of an ill-treated nation, and appeals to outraged national sentiments, as German fascism did, for instance, when it won the support of the masses of the petty bourgeoisie by the slogan "Against the Versailles Treaty!"

Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses, but it approaches them with the most artful anti-capitalist demagogery, taking advantage of the deep hatred of the working people against the plundering bourgeoisie, the

banks, trusts and financial magnates, and advancing those slogans which at the given moment are most alluring to the politically immature masses. In Germany—"The general welfare is higher than the welfare of the individual"; in Italy—"Our state is not a capitalist, but a corporate state"; in Japan—"For Japan without exploitation"; in the United States—"Share the wealth", and so forth.

Fascism places the people at the mercy of the most corrupt and venal elements, but comes before them with the demand for "an honest and incorruptible government". Speculating on the profound disillusionment of the masses in bourgeois-democratic governments, fascism hypocritically denounces corruption (for instance, the Barmat and Sklarek affairs in Germany, the Stavisky affair in France, and numerous others).

It is in the interests of the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie that fascism intercepts the disappointed masses who desert the old bourgeois parties. But it impresses these masses by the *severity of its attacks* on the bourgeois governments and its irreconcilable attitude to the old bourgeois parties.

Surpassing in its cynicism and hypocrisy all other varieties of bourgeois reaction, fascism *adapts* its demagogic to the *national peculiarities* of each country, and even to the peculiarities of the various social strata in one and the same country. And the mass of the petty bourgeoisie and even a section of the workers, reduced to despair by want, unemployment and the insecurity of their existence, fall victim to the social and chauvinist demagogic of fascism.

Fascism comes to power as a *party of attack* on the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, on the mass of the people who are in a state of unrest; yet it stages its accession to power as a "revolutionary" movement against the bourgeoisie on behalf of "the whole nation" and for the "salvation" of the nation (one recalls Mussolini's "march" on Rome, Piłsudski's "march" on Warsaw, Hitler's National-Socialist "revolution" in Germany, and so forth.)

But whatever the masks which fascism adopts, whatever the forms in which it presents itself, whatever the ways by which it comes to power—

Fascism is a most ferocious attack by capital on the mass of the working people;

Fascism is unbridled chauvinism and predatory war;

Fascism is rabid reaction and counter-revolution;

Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and of all working people!

CONTENT AND FORMS OF THE UNITED FRONT

What is and ought to be the basic content of the united front at the present stage? The defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defence of the working class against fascism, must form the *starting point and main content* of the united front in all capitalist countries.

We must not confine ourselves to bare appeals to struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. We must find and advance those slogans and forms of struggle which arise from the vital needs of the masses, from the level of their fighting capacity at the present stage of development.

We must point out to the masses what they must do *today* to defend themselves against capitalist spoliation and fascist barbarity.

We must strive to establish the widest united front with the aid of joint action by workers' organisations of different trends for the defence of the vital interests of the labouring masses. This means:

First, joint struggle really to shift the burden of the consequences of the crisis onto the shoulders of the ruling classes, the shoulders of the capitalists, landlords—in a word, on to the shoulders of the rich.

Second, joint struggle against all forms of the fascist offensive, in defence of the gains and the rights of the working people, against the destruction of bourgeois-democratic liberties.

Third, joint struggle against the approaching danger of imperialist war, a struggle that will make the preparation of such a war more difficult.

We must tirelessly prepare the working class for a *rapid change in forms and methods of struggle* when there is a change in the situation. As the movement grows and the unity of the working class strengthens, we must go further, and prepare the transition *from the defensive to the offensive against capital*, steering toward the *organisation of a mass political strike*. It must be an absolute condition of such a

strike to draw into it the main trade unions of the countries concerned.

Communists, of course, cannot and must not for a moment abandon their own *independent work* of Communist education, organisation and mobilisation of the masses. However, to ensure that the workers find the road of united action, it is necessary to strive at the same time both for short-term and for long-term agreements that provide for *joint action with Social-Democratic Parties, reformist trade unions and other organisations of the working people* against the class enemies of the proletariat. The chief stress in all this must be laid on developing *mass action*, locally, *to be carried out by the local organisations* through local agreements. While loyally carrying out the conditions of all agreements made with them, we shall mercilessly expose all sabotage of joint action on the part of persons and organisations participating in the united front. To any attempt to wreck the agreements—and such attempts may possibly be made—we shall reply by appealing to the masses while continuing untiringly to struggle for restoration of the disrupted unity of action.

It goes without saying that the practical realisation of the united front will take *various forms* in various countries, depending upon the condition and character of the workers' organisations and their political level, upon the situation in the particular country, upon the changes in progress in the international labour movement, etc.

These forms may include, for instance: coordinated joint action of the workers to be agreed upon *from case to case* on definite occasions, on individual demands or on the basis of a common platform; coordinated actions in *individual enterprises* or by *whole industries*; coordinated actions on a *local, regional, national or international scale*; coordinated actions for the organisation of the *economic struggle* of the workers, for carrying out mass *political actions*, for the organisation of *joint self-defence* against fascist attacks; coordinated action in rendering *aid to political prisoners and their families*, in the field of struggle against *social reaction*; joint actions in the defence of the *interests of the youth and women*, in the field of the *cooperative movement, cultural activity, sport, etc.*

It would be insufficient to rest content with the conclusion of a pact providing for joint action and the formation of contact committees from the parties and organisations participat-

ing in the united front, like those we have in France, for instance. That is only the first step. The pact is an auxiliary means for obtaining joint action, but by itself it does not constitute a united front. A contact commission between the leaders of the Communist and Socialist Parties is necessary to facilitate the carrying out of joint action, but by itself it is far from adequate for a real development of the united front, for drawing the widest masses into the struggle against fascism.

The Communists and all revolutionary workers must strive for the formation of elected (and in the countries of fascist dictatorship—selected from the most authoritative participants in the united front movement) *non-partisan class bodies of the united front*, at the *factories*, among the *unemployed*, in the *working-class districts*, among the *small towns-folk* and in the *villages*. Only such bodies will be able to bring into the united front movement also the vast mass of unorganised working people, assist in developing mass initiative in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, against fascism and reaction, and on this basis create the necessary *broad cadre of united front activists* and train hundreds and thousands of non-Party Bolsheviks in the capitalist countries.

Joint action of the *organised workers* is the beginning, the foundation. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the unorganised masses constitute the vast majority of workers. In "normal" times this mass does not, in the main, participate in political life. But now this gigantic mass is coming into motion more and more, is being brought into political life, is active on the political scene.

The creation of non-partisan class bodies is the *best form* for carrying out, extending and strengthening the united front among the rank and file of the masses. These bodies will likewise be the best bulwark against any attempt of the opponents of the united front to disrupt the growing unity of action of the working class.

WORK IN FASCIST MASS ORGANISATIONS

In order to be able to strike a telling blow at the fascist dictatorship, we must first find out what is its most vulnerable point. What is the Achilles' heel of the fascist dictatorship? Its social basis. The latter is extremely heterogeneous.

It is made up of various classes and strata of society. Fascism has proclaimed itself the sole representative of all classes and strata of the population: the manufacturer and the worker, the millionaire and the unemployed, the Junker and the small peasant, the big businessman and the artisan. It pretends to defend the interests of all these strata, the interests of the nation. But since it is a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, fascism must inevitably come into conflict with its mass social basis, all the more since, under the fascist dictatorship, the class contradictions between the pack of financial magnates and the overwhelming majority of the people are brought out in greatest relief.

We can lead the masses to a decisive struggle for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship only by getting the workers who have been forced into the fascist organisations, or have joined them through ignorance, to take part in *the most elementary movements* for the defence of their economic, political and cultural interests. It is for this reason that the Communists must work in these organisations, as the best champions of the day-to-day interests of the mass of members, bearing in mind that as the workers belonging to these organisations begin more and more frequently to demand their rights and defend their interests, they inevitably come into conflict with the fascist dictatorship.

In defending the urgent and at first the most elementary interests of the working people in town and countryside, it is comparatively easier to find a common language not only with the conscious anti-fascists, but also with those of the working people who are still supporters of fascism, but are disillusioned and dissatisfied with its policy, and are grumbling and seeking an occasion for expressing their discontent. In general, we must realise that all our tactics in countries with a fascist dictatorship must be of such a character as not to repulse the rank-and-file supporters of fascism, not to throw them once more into the arms of fascism, but to deepen the gulf between the fascist leaders and the mass of disillusioned rank-and-file followers of fascism drawn from the working sections of society.

We need not be dismayed, comrades, if the people mobilised around these day-to-day interests consider themselves either indifferent to politics or even followers of fascism. The important thing for us is to draw them into the movement, which, although it may not at first proceed openly under

the slogans of the struggle against fascism, is already objectively an antifascist movement putting these masses into opposition to the fascist dictatorship.

Experience teaches us that the view that it is *generally impossible*, in countries with a fascist dictatorship, to come out legally or semi-legally, is harmful and incorrect. To insist on this point of view means to fall into passivity, and to renounce real mass work altogether. True, under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship, to find forms and methods of legal or semi-legal action is a difficult and complex problem. But, as in many other questions, the path is indicated by life itself and by the initiative of the masses themselves, who have already provided us with a number of examples that must be generalised and applied in an organised and effective manner.

We must very resolutely put an end to the tendency to underestimate work in the fascist mass organisations. In Italy, in Germany and in a number of other fascist countries, our comrades tried to conceal their passivity, and frequently even their direct refusal to work in the fascist mass organisations, by putting forward work in the factories as against work in the fascist mass organisations. In reality, however, it was just this mechanical distinction which led to work being conducted very feebly, and sometimes not at all, both in the fascist mass organisations and in the factories.

Yet it is particularly important that Communists in the fascist countries should be wherever the masses are to be found. Fascism has deprived the workers of their own legal organisations. It has forced the fascist organisations upon them, as it is *there that the masses are*—by compulsion, or to some extent voluntarily. These mass fascist organisations can and must be made our legal or semi-legal field of action where we can meet the masses. They can and must be made our legal or semi-legal starting point for the defence of the day-to-day interests of the masses. To utilise these possibilities, Communists must win elected positions in the fascist mass organisations, for contact with the masses, and must rid themselves once and for all of the prejudice that such activity is unseemly and unworthy of a revolutionary worker.

A UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT

It is primarily a *government of struggle against fascism and reaction*. It must be a government arising as the result of the united front movement and in no way restricting the activity of the Communist Party and the mass organisations of the working class, but, on the contrary, taking resolute measures against the counter-revolutionary financial magnates and their fascist agents.

At a suitable moment, relying on the growing united front movement, the Communist Party of a given country will advocate the formation of such a government on the basis of a well-defined anti-fascist platform.

Under what objective conditions will it be possible to form such a government? In the most general terms, one can reply to this question as follows: under conditions of a *political crisis*, when the ruling classes are no longer able to cope with the powerful rise of the mass anti-fascist movement. But this is only a general perspective, without which it will scarcely be possible in practice to form a united front government. Only the existence of certain *special prerequisites* can put on the agenda the question of forming such a government as a politically essential task. It seems to me that the following prerequisites deserve the greatest attention in this connection:

First, the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie must already be sufficiently *disorganised and paralysed*, so that the bourgeoisie cannot prevent the formation of a government of struggle against reaction and fascism.

Second, the widest masses of working people, particularly the mass trade unions, must be in a state of vehement revolt *against fascism and reaction*, though *not ready* to rise in insurrection so as to *fight under Communist Party leadership for the establishment of a Soviet government*.

Third, the differentiation and radicalisation in the ranks of Social Democracy and other parties participating in the united front must already have reached the point where a considerable proportion of them demand *ruthless measures against the fascists and other reactionaries*, fight together with the Communists against fascism and openly oppose the reactionary section of their own party which is hostile to communism.

When and in what countries a situation will actually arise in which these prerequisites will be present in a sufficient

degree, it is impossible to state in advance. But as such a possibility *is not to be ruled out in any of the capitalist countries*, we must reckon with it, and not only orientate and prepare ourselves, but also orientate the working class accordingly.

Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, August 2, 1935—The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism.

AT THE FIFTH CONGRESS OF THE BULGARIAN WORKERS' PARTY

THE NATURE OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC STATE

The nature of people's democracy and of the people's democratic state is determined by the following four characteristics:

a) The people's democratic state signifies power by the working people, the vast majority of the population, with the working class playing the leading role. This means, first, that the power of the capitalists and big landowners has been overthrown and the power established of the working people of town and country under working-class leadership; as the most advanced class of modern society, the working class plays the leading role in the state and in public life. Second, it means that the state is a weapon in the working people's fight against exploiter elements, against all attempts and tendencies to re-establish the capitalist system and domination of the bourgeoisie.

b) The people's democratic state is the state of the transition period, its mission being to lead the country to socialism. This means that, though the power of the capitalists and big landowners has been overthrown and their property taken over by the people, the economic roots of capitalism have not yet been extirpated and capitalist elements remain, develop and try to bring back capitalist slavery. Consequently, the advance to socialism is possible only if there is an irreconcilable class struggle against the capitalist elements ending in their complete elimination.

Only by steadily advancing to socialism can the people's democratic state strengthen its positions and discharge its historic mission. If people's democracy abandoned the fight against the exploiting classes, ceased to suppress and oust the capitalist elements, the latter would inevitably gain the upper hand, undermine the foundations of people's democracy and lead it to its doom.

c) The people's democratic state is built and developed in cooperation and friendship with the Soviet Union, the land of socialism. Just as our country's liberation from imperialism and the creation of our people's democratic state were possible only thanks to the Soviet Union's assistance and its liberating mission in the war against fascist Germany and its allies, the continued development of our people's democracy requires retention and strengthening of close relations and sincere cooperation, mutual assistance and friendship between our country and the great Soviet Union. Any tendency towards weakening cooperation with the Soviet Union is aimed at the very foundations of our people's democracy.

d) The people's democratic state belongs in the democratic, anti-imperialist camp.

Only by participating in the united democratic, anti-imperialist camp headed by the powerful Soviet Union, can each people's democracy uphold its independence, sovereignty and security against imperialist aggression.

From Central Committee Report to 5th Congress, Bulgarian Workers' Party, December 19, 1948.

CHAPTERS FROM DIMITROV'S LIFE STORY

FAMILY OF REVOLUTIONARIES

Free at last from five centuries of Turkish rule, the Bulgaria of the 1880s, the time of Georgi Dimitrov's birth, ranked among Europe's most backward countries. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877—1878 had for Bulgaria the same effect as a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Traditions of the revolutionary and liberative movement, and a yearning for democratic reforms, were running high. But the burgeoning bourgeoisie at once established a regime of grinding exploitation.

Dimitrov was born in a little village, Kovachevtsi, on June 18, 1882. His parents—hard-working, but poor—taught their children to be honest and brave, and to abhor violence and injustice. Driven by poverty, the family moved to Sofia soon after Georgi's birth. Not until several years later, however, were they able to build a little house in the outskirts of the capital. Now a museum, the Dimitrov home still retains the atmosphere of Georgi's youth.

His father, Dimitr Mikhailov, crushed by hardships and poverty, died in 1913. His mother, Parashkeva Doseva, had learned to read with her husband's help, and later, fulfilling Party assignments, was glad that she could read addresses and find streets where underground trysting places were located. All her life she was eager to help her children in their revolutionary work. In 1933, when Dimitrov was in Moabit prison, she went unhesitatingly to attend his trial in Leipzig and Berlin, despite her advanced age. Her fiery speech at a mass meeting in Paris helped start the international campaign for Dimitrov's release. Her courage gave him strength in the dark days of the battle...

Based on the manuscript of "Georgi Dimitrov. A Biography", prepared by the Institute of History, Bulgarian Communist Party. Also used were the two-volume "Spomeni za Georgi Dimitrov" (Remembrances of Georgi Dimitrov), Sofia, Partizdat, 1971, and "Istoriya na Bulgarskata kommunisticheska partiya" (History of the Bulgarian Communist Party), Sofia, Partizdat, 1969.



Here Dimitrov was born.

The Dimitrovs had many children. One of Georgi's brothers, a capable trade union functionary, lost his life in the 1912 Balkan War. Another brother was in a Bolshevik organisation in Odessa and died in banishment in 1916. The third brother was killed by the Bulgarian police during the unrest of April 1925. Dimitrov's two sisters, too, participated in the revolutionary movement.

As a boy, Georgi was an avid reader and was especially fond of tales about the Bulgarian national-liberation struggle and exploits of revolutionaries.

He did not finish school; he had to help his family and at twelve became a compositor. "It's like a miracle," he told his sister of his first impressions in the printshop. "You set letter after letter, and get a word. You set word after word, and get a line. Then out comes a newspaper, or a book... And setting down the letters you are always reading. It's like going to school."

Childhood was over. Dimitrov embarked on a workingman's life. The working class was his teacher and mentor.

SON OF THE WORKING CLASS

Georgi Dimitrov had a taste of grinding exploitation, but also learned of workers' solidarity in the struggle. Among workers, he became steeled as a fighter for the truth, and

gradually acquired a Marxist outlook, developing as a union leader and Communist.

His extraordinary gifts and range of interests quickly attracted the notice of his mates in the printshop. It did not take long for him to learn his trade and set any kind of newspaper text. Angrily or jubilantly he would then relate the content to his comrades.

His baptism of fire came when he was thirteen, during the general printers' strike in Sofia. Soon he became a member of the leadership of the Printers' Society. A trade-union library was founded on his initiative, and he initiated improvements in working conditions. It was also due to his efforts that the Printers' Society was admitted to the International Printers' Union.

Following the 1898 Mayday demonstration, Radoslavov, a bourgeois politician, wrote an article slandering the workers and advocating reprisals. Dimitrov, then only sixteen, defied threats and refused to set the text. The writer was compelled to delete parts of the article. And in 1915 as a parliamentary deputy Dimitrov protested against abuses of censorship. Radoslavov who had become Prime Minister, recalled that once Dimitrov had seen fit to censor his article. "Then, just as now," Dimitrov replied calmly, "I was defending the interests and honour of the working class, whereas you, then and now, are suppressing the opinion of the labouring masses."

ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE HE LEARNED

Dimitrov's graduation papers, as he liked to say, were not issued by any university authorities, but were the fruit of struggle. "Always, everywhere, I learned," Dimitrov said. "I learned working in the printshop. I learned when in prison. And I learned during the Leipzig trial."

He began learning Marxism from a popular edition of Marx's *Capital* and the *Communist Manifesto*. He also read G. V. Plekhanov's *The Monistic View of History*, Dimitr Blagoev's *What Is Socialism and Has It Any Roots in Bulgaria?*, and other Marxist works. After a hard day's work in the printshop, Dimitrov attended lectures by Blagoev and Kirkov, the Bulgarian revolutionaries and Socialists, at the workers'

club, where he also studied mathematics and astronomy, and learned Russian and German.

Rakhmetov from N. G. Chernyshevsky's *What Is To Be Done?* was his favourite fictional hero. "I wanted to be firm and steadfast, fearless and dedicated," he wrote later, "and to steel my will and character in battling difficulties and hardships, dedicating my life to the workers' cause. In short, I wanted to be as I pictured to myself that sterling hero of Chernyshevsky's novel."

Dimitrov's own library contained some 3,000 books—many works by Bulgarian, Russian, West-European and other writers, and some in the authors' own language. But political and Marxist-Leninist literature predominated. Marx's *Capital* he had in Bulgarian and French, and Lenin's *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* in Russian. He also had Karl Liebknecht's book, *My Court Trial*, which he possibly recalled during his own trial in Leipzig.

In 1906 Dimitrov married Lyuba Ivoshevich, a gifted proletarian journalist and poet. For nearly thirty years she was his loyal friend, sharing his hard life of revolutionary, a dependable companion and helper in his tireless and versatile work. She died in his absence: he was then in a fascist prison.

ACTIVE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY LABOUR UNIONS

While doing union work in the Printers' Society, Dimitrov joined the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Workers' Party in the spring of 1902, and plunged with redoubled energy into the battle for the workers' interests. The club of the Sofia Party branch became for him a second home. At 22 he was elected secretary of the Sofia Workers' Council of the newly-founded General Workers' Syndicalist Union, and in 1909 secretary of the entire Union. He devoted himself heart and soul to union work, was always among the workers, directing their struggles and organising demonstrations.

He was a central figure in the strike movement, which became more bitter and stubborn with the passing years. In the summer of 1906 he headed the strike committee of Pernik coalminers, his firmness and courage giving inspiration to the strikers, with the result that many of their demands were met. It had been a good lesson for the miners and for young Dimitrov. In 1909 he led a strike in the match factory, and

the following year barely escaped with his life when fired upon as he addressed striking copper miners. Calling on members of neutral and reformist unions to join the printers' strike in 1910, Dimitrov exposed the opportunists' views, stressing the importance of labour unity "under the banner of revolutionary socialism". This standpoint attracted a large mass of workers to the Syndicalist Union, while an unprincipled scrimmage for power was under way in the reformist unions.

Dimitrov wrote many brochures and articles on the union movement, analysing its tasks and emphasising the need for bonds with the Marxist workers' party. He helped put out a trade-union page in *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, the Party's central organ, and for a number of years edited the trade papers, *Compositor*, *Miner* and *Telegraph and Postal Worker*, calling on workers to contribute to the proletarian press.

Dimitrov was an ardent advocate of united action by workers of different countries. He organised collections for strikers in Sweden (1909), Germany (1910), Belgium and Rumania (1911), and other countries, and attended international trade union conferences.

A COMMUNIST DEVELOPS IN BATTLE

Dimitrov joined the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party at the height of the struggle between the Tesnyak Socialists, the revolutionary Marxist trend headed by the Party's founder Dimitr Blagoev, and the opportunist petty-bourgeois trend. He did not hesitate to side with the Marxists, as evidenced by his first article in the June 12 and 19, 1903 issues of *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, "Opportunism in the Unions", and was active in the Party's battle against the petty-bourgeois faction of anarcho-liberal intellectuals.

In 1909 Dimitrov was elected to the Party's Central Committee, a member of which he remained until the end of his life.

He took a prominent part in the Party's struggle against the bourgeois governments' Balkan policies, and exposed the young capitalist states' nationalism and lust of conquest, the rivalry among the big imperialist countries, and imperialist attempts at setting the Balkan peoples against each other by fanning chauvinist sentiment. The workers must not give their lives for alien interests, he pointed out, but should organise

for class struggle, which was on the upgrade. "We are preparing all-out for this only kind of liberative war," he said, "which will assure lasting peace, freedom and happiness for all peoples, in place of the death and destruction wrought by the present wars and bloody adventures."



1904-1905. Georgi Dimitrov — Secretary of the Sofia Party organisation

against war, who are decidedly against militarism," Dimitrov said, "are prepared to make sacrifices if our country's independence and freedom are imperilled... But we shall not donate a single centime or a single drop of blood for a policy leading to the country's perdition, and not to guarantees of freedom and independence. That is our central idea, that is our principle". It was a truly internationalist attitude, contrasting radically to the betrayal of the opportunist leaders of the Second International.

Dimitrov articulately opposed placing the burden of the war on the people. He exposed the criminal policy of the Bulgarian

In 1913 Dimitrov was elected to the National Assembly, and was then re-elected again and again, save for the years of emigration. His ardent speeches in the parliament are still exciting today, for they came from the heart and advocated the workers' cause.

Though during the First World War the Bulgarian Party had not yet absorbed all Lenin's ideas on war and peace, it took a firm internationalist stand. Speaking on behalf of the Tesnyak deputies, Dimitrov told the parliament that the Socialists would not only oppose additional military allocations, but objected to military allocations in general. "We who are

bourgeoisie and monarchists, fought for the people's social rights, promoted labour legislation and worked against unemployment. He travelled across the country, inspiring and organising working people everywhere. "The only way of safeguarding the future peace," Dimitrov wrote in February 1917, "is to substitute socialism for capitalism. Nothing but socialism can show mankind the way out of the dead end into which it was led by the bourgeoisie. Peace is inconceivable without socialism."

THE LIGHT OF THE OCTOBER

The Great October Socialist Revolution echoed and re-echoed across Bulgaria. A dedicated propagandist of its ideas, Dimitrov wrote: "Along with Marx and Engels, the great founders of scientific socialism and authors of the *Communist Manifesto*, Lenin has immortalised himself in the history of the workers' liberation movement by the gigantic undertaking of the Russian socialist revolution in Russia, the application in practice of the principles of the *Communist Manifesto*, and the establishment of the Soviet proletarian state." Despite persecution and censorship, the Bulgarian Party broadly propagated the slogans of the October Revolution. Many of its members were arrested. Despite his parliamentary immunity, Dimitrov, too, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Meetings protesting his arrest swept the country. The nation demanded Dimitrov's freedom. He, too, battled vigorously for release, writing letters to the National Assembly and the Minister of Justice. Some three months later, the authorities were compelled to let him out of prison. And though subsequently arrested several times, nothing could force the staunch revolutionary to his knees or break his revolutionary spirit.

Discontent over the senseless war, the corruption and hunger, mounted. The Agrarian League, with many peasants on its rolls, entered the struggle. The Party, however, underrated the League's political weight. And when the soldiers turned their bayonets against the culprits of the national disaster in the autumn of 1918, the Party again looked on passively, failing even to rally support for the rebels. Dimitrov, who was then in prison, was dismayed: he insisted on closer contacts with the Agrarian League and on aiding the soldiers' insurrection. Regrettably, his advice was ignored.

In 1919, the Bulgarian Party took part in inaugurating the Third, Communist International. At its next congress it was renamed the Bulgarian Communist Party (of Tesnyak Socialists) and adopted the basic postulates of Lenin's teaching on imperialism.

A big railway strike and the supporting general political strike, which Dimitrov described as "the most magnificent act of working-class political solidarity with the railwaymen", were the peak of the revolutionary wave sweeping the country at that time. The government was determined to suppress the strike at any price, and turned the country into an armed camp. Dimitrov, who had headed the railway strike, went underground. However, he remained in the thick of the battle, inspiring confidence among the workers.

He was elected the Party's delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern and set out across the Black Sea with Vasil Kolarov and the other delegates in a fishing-boat. Rumanian borderguards spotted and arrested the gallant band of Communists, but protests by Bulgarian and Rumanian workers and representations by the Soviet Government compelled the authorities to release them.

MEETING WITH V. I. LENIN

The Agrarian League government formed in the spring of 1920 was under the delusion that it could build an independent peasant regime, and spurned collaboration with the Communist Party in combating reaction and the monarchy. The Party, too, would not abandon its hostility to cooperation with the League. This divided the nation's democratic forces. Reaction gained ground.

In this complicated situation, the BCP groped for answers to many a vital problem.

Delegated to the Third Comintern Congress, Dimitrov came to Moscow in February 1921. There, he met and spoke with Lenin.

Lenin was impressed by Dimitrov's account of the progress and difficulties of the BCP and the enthusiasm roused by the October Revolution. But when Dimitrov remarked that the BCP was ready to take over power, Lenin advised to concentrate on building up the Party as the vanguard of the working

class, forge a worker-peasant alliance, chiefly with the poor and middle peasants, and gain more influence in the army. "That," Lenin said, "is now the most important, I would even say the decisive thing for your Communist Party. Beware of over-eagerness, tread with care, and work indefatigably to assure complete victory for the revolution in your country."

Dimitrov's meeting with Lenin made an ineradicable impression on him. More, it was determinative in the ideological evolution of the Bulgarian Party.

The Third Comintern Congress decisions, too, epitomised in the slogan, "Go to the Masses", had a strong bearing on the further growth of the Bulgarian Party: in 1922, Lenin's united front tactics endorsed by it were adopted by the 4th Congress of the BCP.

On returning home, Dimitrov worked for a united proletarian front and for greater Communist influence among the working people. He elucidated the new situation and the new forms of the proletarian struggle. He was one of the first to point out that the people of Bulgaria should follow the Comintern and Party slogan, "For a Worker-Peasant Government".

AT THE HEAD OF THE SEPTEMBER RISING

On June 9, 1923, the big bourgeoisie performed a military coup and set up a fascist regime. At local levels, Communists and Agrarians acted in unison, rendering armed resistance. However, defining the coup as a collision between the rural and urban bourgeoisie, the BCP Central Committee declared itself neutral. The favourable chances of crushing the fascist dictatorship before it gained a more secure foothold were thus missed. Dimitrov, too, fell in with the erroneous standpoint of the Central Committee. However, a few months later the Marxist core of the Central Committee called for an armed uprising.

This change of heart was brought about by Comintern criticism. The BCP was advised to seek closer ties with the Agrarian League, organise joint resistance to fascism and set up a worker-peasant government.

Vasil Kolarov, then General Secretary of the Comintern Executive, returned to Bulgaria to explain the Comintern view-



V. I. Lenin and Georgi Dimitrov, Moscow, 1921

Oils, I. Petrov

point and participate in his Party's revolutionary struggles. Dimitrov quickly shed his doubts. In early August, the Central Committee resolved to concentrate all efforts "chiefly on countrywide preparations of a massive armed uprising". The immediate task was to forge a united front of workers and peasants, and to rally the democratic and progressive forces. Dimitrov, and principally his articles for a united front, played the decisive role in the Party's change to Leninist positions. Party workers spurning a united front, he pointed out, forgot that liberation from fascist oppression was inconceivable by working-class strength alone and that all working people should be drawn into the battle against the rule of the reactionary bourgeoisie.

The Party made common cause with the sound forces of the Agrarian League and launched preparations for an armed uprising. The CC BCP set the date of the rising on September 23, 1923. Kolarov and Dimitrov were made members of the

Chief Military-Revolutionary Committee. A 24-hour protest strike was to have been held in the capital on the eve of the uprising, but did not spread to all enterprises due to wholesale arrests, which put the Sofia military-revolutionary committee out of action. As a result, in some districts the rising began before the scheduled hour. Weighing the situation, Kolarov and Dimitrov decided against changing the plan; they were determined to use all available means to overthrow the fascist regime.

The centre of the rising was in north-west Bulgaria. The arrival there of Kolarov and Dimitrov roused the enthusiasm of workers and peasants alike. After several days of fighting almost the entire region came under insurrectionist control, and a worker-peasant administration was instantly established. Dimitrov displayed consummate skill and will power in directing the armed struggle.

But the September rising was defeated. Kolarov and Dimitrov were sentenced to death in absentia. Compelled to emigrate, they wrote an "Open Letter to the Workers and Peasants of Bulgaria", analysing the reasons for the defeat and calling on the workers and peasants to retain their faith. "Heads high! The bloody revenge of the whiteguard scum dreading to lose its grip on power will never succeed in crushing the fighting spirit of Bulgaria's working men! The defeat will teach us how to win!"

Sacrifices and the jointly spilled blood cemented the unity of the country's progressive forces. A burning hatred of the fascist dictatorship was passed down from generation to generation. The significance of the September rising was duly assessed by the Communist International.

YEARS IN EXILE

In the early years of his exile Dimitrov lived under assumed names almost all the time, changing addresses continuously. But while obeying the rules of secrecy, he conducted strenuous work.

A BCP Committee Abroad was formed in Vienna at the end of 1923. Headed by Dimitrov, it applied itself to rehabilitating and uniting the Party, badly hit after the September rising. Dimitrov fought off the "liquidationists", who branded the

September rising as folly and wanted to rupture ties with the Comintern, and combated those over-eager CC members who scorned patient Party work among the people and called for revolutionary terror against the reprisals of the fascist regime. Unfortunately, the efforts of Dimitrov, deprived of immediate contacts with his Party comrades, were not completely successful. The BCP fell prey to sectarianism.

The years of banishment saw Dimitrov's development into a prominent leader of the world Communist movement. Soon after coming to Vienna he was elected secretary of the Balkan Communist Federation, and was made representative of the Comintern with the Austrian Communist Party, helping it combat factionalism. "We Austrian Communists," Johann Koplenig later recalled, "respected and loved him not only as the great revolutionary fighter that he was, but as a friend and a warm-hearted man. Everything he did was alive, full of movement, contagious, and abounding in vitality and faith in the working class and the victory of the workers' cause across the world."

When working in the Executive Committee, Dimitrov was put in charge of the Comintern sections in Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. He fought to block a coalition between the Trotskyist opposition in the Soviet Communist Party and opposition elements in other fraternal parties. The battle against Trotskyism Dimitrov regarded as a battle "for the survival of the Communist International".

Dimitrov was also highly active in the international trade-union movement. A member of the Executive of the Red International of Labour Unions, he contributed greatly to the elaboration of the problems of trade-union unity. Speaking at its 4th Congress in 1928, he called on the working class to wage an "irreconcilable and merciless struggle to the end" against fascism, that "mortal enemy of the proletariat and the class unions".

Early in 1929 Dimitrov moved to Berlin, where he was placed in charge of the West-European Bureau of the Comintern Executive. He was highly active in consolidating the Communist movement and rallying the masses against fascism and the war danger. His contacts extended to 25 parties and a number of international bodies. He held conferences to discuss and coordinate anti-war actions and Communist activity among unemployed.

THE LEIPZIG TRIAL

Returning to Berlin from Munich on February 28, 1933, Dimitrov learned of the Reichstag fire and of the charge against the Communists. Knowing the political situation in Germany, he had no doubt that this was a monstrous Nazi provocation. And he knew its purpose: not at all sure of winning the March 5 elections, the Nazis needed some pretext to crush the democratic forces, especially the Communist Party of Germany.

The day after the fire came the presidential decree on "Defence of the People and State". It abolished all democratic freedoms, giving the Nazis a "legal" basis for their attack on the Communists and all their other political and ideological opponents. Ernst Thaelmann was arrested on March 3. On March 9 Dimitrov was arrested at the Bayerischer Hof Restaurant together with two other Bulgarian Communists, B. Popov and V. Tanev. A waiter had pointed them out to the police.

The Nazis were triumphant—they had three Bulgarian Communists, the Chairman of the Communist parliamentary group, E. Torgler, who had voluntarily come to the police to refute the malicious anti-Communist slander, and also the Dutchman van der Lubbe, arrested on the day of the fire and presented by the Nazis as a "Communist". Feeling that they could now act with impunity, the Nazi chieftains decided to stage a public trial.

At the very first police interrogations, Dimitrov refused to sign the record, declaring that he had no trust in the German police. In a letter to the police investigating authorities, on March 20, he declared that, as a Communist, he could not possibly have any part, direct or indirect, in such an anti-Communist act, and that the Reichstag fire was the work either of some insane persons or of sworn enemies of communism.

Dimitrov was put in the Moabit, a prison notorious for its harsh regimen, and kept handcuffed. Later he was to recall that very often, particularly at night, the handcuffs were so tight that his hands became numb. This lasted five months, but no amount of torture could break this courageous Communist. He turned his prison cell into a "study". He made a thorough study of German law, including criminal law, German and world history, the nature of wars, philosophy,

perfected his knowledge of German, read hundreds of pages of Goethe, Shakespeare, Byron, Sophocles, Dante, Cervantes, Molière... He was systematically and thoroughly preparing for the political battle against fascism, exposing the testimony of hand-picked witnesses and the trickery of the fascist prosecutor. Given the bill of indictment, he denounced it as an "unheard-of machination".

Fascist propaganda was doing everything to convince the world that the trial would be fair and impartial. But in many countries there was already a powerful protest movement against the frameup. The Communists were well to the fore in this struggle. An international committee in defence of the victims of German fascism was organised and joined by renowned scientists and cultural personalities. Prominent jurists organised the London counter-trial which effectively exposed the Reichstag fire as a fascist provocation.

The trial of Dimitrov began on September 21, 1933, at the Reich Court in Leipzig. Dimitrov took the stand on the third day, which happened to be the tenth anniversary of the September rising in Bulgaria. And he gave a vivid picture of this revolutionary struggle in which he himself had played such a prominent part. His exposure of the political essence of the fascist regime and his defence of communism transformed the trial. Dimitrov made the dock a revolutionary tribune; he turned the trial into a trial of fascism.

His courage and revolutionary staunchness aroused admiration in every part of the world. Support for Dimitrov came from all sections of the population. Even the bourgeois press could not but admit that here was a man of outstanding courage and ability.

On October 10 the trial was transferred to the Reichstag in Berlin. The Nazis hoped to get the verdict they wanted by bringing in new witnesses from among Nazi Reichstag deputies, police stooges and criminal elements. Dimitrov's cross-questioning foiled that plan.

And then Goering and Goebbels took the witness stand. Goering, then Prime-Minister of Prussia and President of the Reichstag, entered the courtroom dressed in storm-trooper uniform and surrounded by his entourage. His arrogant self-confidence was broken by Dimitrov's very first questions. Among other things Dimitrov showed the glaring contradictions between his evidence and that of other witnesses. Goering was enraged. "Get out, you scoundrel!" he

shouted. The presiding judge expelled Dimitrov. As he was led out, he dealt his last blow: "Are you afraid of my questions, Herr Prime Minister?" There was much laughter, and a fresh stream of invective from Goering.

Goebbels hoped that his propaganda expertise would make up for the bad impression created by Goering. He was, he said, prepared to answer every question put by the accused. But Dimitrov's questions compelled Goebbels to admit that the Nazis were destroying Communists and Social-Democrats, were trampling on all the laws and all the rights of the people. Fearing more exposures, the presiding judge cut short the proceedings.

The trial resumed in Leipzig. On December 16, 1933, Dimitrov made his famous concluding speech before the court. He proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the Communists were in no way involved in the Reichstag fire, called on the working people to fight fascism and outlined the strategy and tactics of the Communist movement. The speech was a fitting finale to his heroic fight at the trial.

Sentence was pronounced on December 23, 1933: Dimitrov, Popov, Tanev and Torgler were acquitted, van der Lubbe, that wretched stooge of the Nazi arsonists, was sentenced to death. But the Nazis had no intention of releasing the Communists. Dimitrov was taken to the Berlin Gestapo prison and it was clear that the fascists were out for his life. For two months the anti-fascist forces of the world fought to save Dimitrov and his comrades. On February 15, 1934, the Soviet government granted Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev Soviet citizenship and demanded their immediate release. The Nazi government had to comply.

IN THE SOVIET UNION

On February 27, 1934, Moscow radio announced that Dimitrov and his comrades had been released and were to arrive in Moscow later that day. They were given an enthusiastic welcome at the airfield, there were touching scenes of friendship and admiration. Florimond Bonte, then *Humanité* correspondent in Moscow, recalled: "When the hero of Leipzig alighted from the plane he was greeted with the strains of the Internationale".

The whole world rejoiced at the release of this courageous

revolutionary. Messages of congratulations and good wishes were coming from every country. Dimitrov maintained friendly contacts with Maxim Gorky, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Paul Langevin, Thomas Mann and Leon Feuchtwanger, and worked for freedom for Ernst Thaelmann, Toivo Antikainen.

The Soviet press carried articles, reports, letters, photographs about the hero of the Leipzig trial. Dimitrov received thousands of telegrams and letters. He visited many factories and collective farms. His speeches and articles were not only



Georgi Dimitrov and Maxim Gorky. 1934

expressive of his gratitude to the Soviet Union for winning his freedom from fascist prison and welcoming him as one of its own. Emphasised in them was the vast role the first socialist state plays in the world revolutionary process, in

the battle against the fascist offensive and the war menace.

Dimitrov's words retain all their validity today: the attitude towards the Soviet Union, he said, is the *touchstone* of the sincerity and integrity of every workers' leader, of every workers' and Communist party. "In the present international situation," he declared, "there can be no *truer criterion* for distinguishing between *friend* and *foe* of democracy and peace than the *attitude* to the Soviet Union".

Dimitrov was near and dear to the Soviet people. In 1937 he was elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet and in 1945 was awarded the Order of Lenin.

SEVENTH COMINTERN CONGRESS

In view of fascism's victory in Germany and the direct danger of war, the Comintern Executive Committee decided to convene the 7th Congress. Its task would be to define Communist Party tactics in the new conditions. Preparation of the main report was entrusted to Dimitrov, who had been elected to the Executive Committee Presidium shortly after his arrival in Moscow.

The line to be followed by the Communist movement was worked out by its prominent leaders. Dimitrov made an important contribution to the theoretical substantiation of Comintern policy. The united front and united working-class action, he pointed out, were now all-important. Accordingly, there could be no wholesale denunciation of Social-Democracy as social-fascism, nor a negative attitude towards all Social-Democratic functionaries and their treatment as deliberate traitors of the working class. Dimitrov emphasised the need to change the methods of Comintern leadership and work, allowing more independence and initiative to the parties. The Executive Committee agreed with these proposals and sent out a directive to the Communist parties to prepare for the international proletarian forum.

The 7th Congress opened in Moscow on July 25, 1935, attended by 513 delegates representing 65 Communist parties and a number of international organisations. Dimitrov's report, "The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of the Working Class against Fascism", set out a strategic plan and flexible tactics for the Communist parties. Dimitrov defined fascism as the

"open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital". He posed in a new way the problem of relations with Social-Democrats and Left trends, trade-union unity, the united anti-fascist front of the youth, and work among women. He appealed to Communists "always and everywhere to be with the masses". He elucidated the problem of the popular front, united and popular-front governments, and the anti-imperialist front as transition forms to proletarian dictatorship. He dealt with the pressing problems of the parties' ideological work and exposed fascist demagogic, nationalism, chauvinism and racialism.

Dimitrov disclosed the main factors in assuring peace and in curbing the imperialist aggressors. These factors were, first and foremost, the Soviet Union, its Red Army, the proletariat of the capitalist countries, the peasantry and all other sections of the working people, the broad masses, who do not want war, the colonial and semi-colonial peoples now passing to more determined struggle against their imperialist masters, a number of capitalist countries now interested in preserving peace. It was not enough to want peace, he declared, peace must be fought for, and he emphasised the Communists' mobilising and leading role in the fight for peace.

Dimitrov attached much importance to strengthening the Communist parties and to the fight against both the Right danger and "Left", sectarian and dogmatic deviations.

At the close of the Congress Dimitrov was elected General Secretary of the Executive of the Communist International.

COMINTERN GENERAL SECRETARY

Dimitrov's years as General Secretary of the Comintern Executive were years of intensive activity by this supreme organ of the international Communist movement. It was in this period that the tasks of the Communist parties before and during the Second World War were creatively worked out. All Comintern activity was reorganised and contacts with fraternal parties improved. Dimitrov closely followed international developments and the position in the various parties, was in touch with international organisations and in correspondence with many prominent anti-fascists. He directed the *Communist*

International magazine and closely followed the work of the Foreign Languages Publishing House. He wrote many articles on problems arising in the various parties and requiring principled solutions.

To all this multiform and complex activity Dimitrov brought his outstanding organisational ability. His approach to all problems was profound, his examination thorough. He was demanding of himself and his associates. All these qualities were complemented by his humane attitude and sincerity in relations with others. He had a way of putting one at ease, of helping one discuss things candidly. Even in the most tangled questions he could always grasp the main, central, point. Everyone who worked with him remembers his friendliness, his warmth, his captivating smile. His personality expressed both strong will and warm heart.

Dimitrov did much to help the Spanish Republic. On his initiative a proposal was made to the Socialist International for joint action in support of Republican Spain. He was one of the organisers of the volunteer International Brigades. In explaining the character of the revolution in Spain, he showed that the Spanish people were fighting for a democratic, anti-fascist state in which the popular front would have a decisive influence. "Theoretically it would perhaps be right to say that this is a special form of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry at the present stage," he wrote. Dimitrov's elucidation of the state of people's democracy was of vast importance for Communist party activity during and after World War II.

When that war broke out, the Comintern Executive Committee Presidium issued an appeal in which it examined the international situation and defined the war as imperialist. In his writings Dimitrov emphasised that responsibility for the imperialist war lay with the bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries. The key task of the world proletariat, he wrote, was to build a united front of the working people and combine their struggle with the movement of colonial and dependent peoples, rally all the revolutionary forces around the great land of socialism, which was upholding the cause of peace. After Nazi Germany's treacherous attack on the USSR, Dimitrov demanded that the Communist parties in the capitalist countries start a broad movement in support of the Soviet Union's just war against fascism, organise a mass national liberation and anti-fascist movement.

On Dimitrov's initiative, radio contact was established with each Party. He saw to it that radio broadcasts were used to promote unity of the anti-fascist forces. He directed the organisation of groups of political exiles, their training and dispatch to various countries where they played an active part in the Resistance. Dimitrov also devoted much time and effort to political re-education of prisoners of war.

The war laid an imprint on the life of all Comintern workers. The tension was immense, many worked round the clock. And Dimitrov, now getting on in age and in poor health, set an example for all.

In Moscow he married his second wife. He was particularly fond of his son Mitya and the daughter of the Chinese Communist Wang Ming, whom he was bringing up. Mitya died in 1943 at the age of seven. This was a terrible blow to Dimitrov and he found consolation only in intensive work.

The Communist International was dissolved on May 15, 1943, by decision of its Executive Committee. But even after that Dimitrov maintained contact with the foreign bureaus of various Communist parties, helping them carry on their activities in the new conditions. The Comintern's Leninist traditions and wealth of experience, he said, would always be a source of inspiration to the world Communist movement.

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY, THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

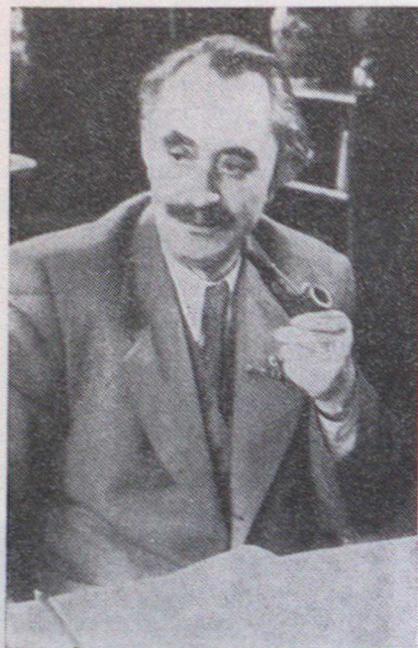
Under Dimitrov's leadership, the Bulgarian Communist Party overcame its sectarianism shortly after the Seventh Comintern Congress and consummated its development into a party of the Leninist type. It worked out a popular front programme, established contact with democratic parties, reorganised the work of the YCL and won wide influence in the trade unions. After the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, it appealed to the Bulgarian people, again on Dimitrov's initiative, to "prevent the use of our territory and our army by the German Nazis... and give every possible support to the Soviet people in their difficult struggle". The Party organised and directed the armed anti-fascist struggle and founded the mass Fatherland Front. It was in these days that Dimitrov's 1944 pamphlet, "Wherein Lies Bulgaria's Salvation?", with its incisive analysis of the crisis caused by the pro-German policy of Bulgaria's rulers, clearly showed the way out, the road to sal-

vation. Speaking for the Foreign Bureau of the Party's Central Committee, Dimitrov called for unity of all the democratic and progressive forces and for armed struggle to overthrow the corrupt monarcho-fascist regime. It was overthrown on September 9, 1944 by joint action of the guerrilla forces and patriotic elements within the army and with decisive support from the advancing Soviet Army, which the people welcomed as liberators. Bulgaria was now ruled, in Dimitrov's own words, "by the vast majority of the people, the toilers of town and country, with the active leading role of the working class and its Communist vanguard". The beginning was thus laid for socialist revolution in Bulgaria.

But Dimitrov warned that the bourgeoisie, still in control of the country's economy, would try to regain its lost positions. He advised the Fatherland Front, made up of divergent



Dimitrov speaking at mass meeting following conclusion of treaty between People's Republic of Bulgaria and Soviet Union, Sofia, March 24, 1948



Georgi Dimitrov. Sofia, 1947.

lution. "It is 22 years since I last set foot on Bulgarian soil," he said, addressing his words to the people of Bulgaria. "But I am sure you will not for a moment doubt that throughout all these years, through all my travels and work, I did not for a moment stop thinking and working for the cause of my people, its future, happiness and prosperity." And Dimitrov spoke with deep affection of the Soviet Union, of the need for closer ties with it. He called on all Bulgarians to vote for the Fatherland Front at the coming elections. There thus began a new chapter in his dedicated effort to build a socialist Bulgaria.

And in this effort, the legislation confiscating illegally acquired property, the agrarian reform law and the law on abolishing the monarchy and proclaiming the republic, all framed under his direction, were of especial importance in strengthening the economic and political foundations of people's democracy. The republic was endorsed overwhelmingly in a national referendum and the Communist Party

classes and strata, on how to preserve its unity. And he pressed for Bulgaria to join in the war against fascist Germany and demanded mobilisation of the entire people to assure final victory over fascism. And it was thanks to Dimitrov's leadership that the Fatherland Front government consolidated its position and the Communist Party its leading role.

Developments in Bulgaria demanded his presence, and he returned to his homeland on November 4, 1945. He was given a rousing welcome when he appeared in Sofia's National Theatre to address a meeting on the anniversary of the October Revolution.

scored a brilliant victory in the elections to the Grand National Assembly. A coalition government was set up with Dimitrov as Prime Minister. As head of government he displayed remarkable statesmanship, prudence and close knowledge of the people's life, interests and aspirations. He devoted much time to framing the new constitution which, based on the principles of people's democracy, opened wide vistas for social development. Bulgaria's treaties of friendship, mutual assistance and cooperation with the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies were, Dimitrov emphasised, historic landmarks. "Friendship with the Soviet Union," he said, "is as vitally necessary for the Bulgarian people as sun and air are for every living organism."

In his report to the Party's Fifth Congress, Dimitrov outlined the country's development towards socialism. He elucidated the problems of people's democracy and clearly defined the ways and methods of building socialism in his own and other countries that had chosen the socialist path after World War II. This and other of his speeches are a valuable contribution to understanding the role of the working class and the Communist Party in socialist society.

HIS MEMORY WILL NEVER DIM

Dimitrov's whole life, the talents with which he was so generously endowed, the experience he had acquired in the Party, were all devoted to the struggle, to the people, to communism. He died on July 2, 1949, and people came from many countries, friends and comrades from 23 fraternal parties, to pay their last respects. "Following Marx, Engels and Lenin," Harry Pollitt said, "Dimitrov has left a deep imprint on the world revolutionary movement which time will never erase."

His body rests in the white marble mausoleum in the centre of Sofia. It is surrounded by flowers brought here in token of gratitude to this fearless fighter, staunch Communist, man of a big heart. Such was Georgi Dimitrov.